

# State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



## PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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**Testimony of  
Natasha M. Pierre  
Associate Legislative Analyst  
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women  
Before the  
Human Services Committee  
Tuesday, February 8, 2005**

**In Support of:  
SB 501, AAC Additional Appropriations for Domestic Violence Shelters**

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Rep. Villano and members of the Committee. My name is Natasha Pierre and I am the Associate Legislative Analyst of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. I am testifying on behalf of PCSW and the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign, which consists of over 50 organizations that work on behalf of women's health issues. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of SB 501, AAC Additional Appropriations for Domestic Violence Shelters.

Domestic violence will affect 1 out of 3 women in the U.S. during their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Last year, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence provided services to 49,608 victims of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup> Of that number, 1,142 women and 1,207 children sought emergency services from any of the 18 domestic violence shelters in the state.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Informational pamphlet. (2004)

<sup>2</sup>CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Domestic Violence Fact Sheet: A Connecticut Perspective. (2004)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Only 3 of those shelters are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The remaining shelters risk not being able to meet the needs of its residents during un-staffed hours.

Domestic violence does not occur between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Victims need to have their needs met no matter what time of day it is. With the current funding of shelter programs averaging out to \$30.00 per victim per day for shelter and support services<sup>4</sup>, it is next to impossible to meet their needs. This is unacceptable, as domestic violence incidents are on the rise and the needs of shelter residents are becoming more complex.

We cannot stress enough the urgent need for domestic violence services because there simply is no guarantee that there will be a “later” for victims and their families. Victims often need to build a new safe life for themselves and their children, and for many shelter and crisis services are the first steps to do so.

We thank you for your attention and urge your support of this proposal to provide crucially needed funding to victims of domestic violence.

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<sup>4</sup>See, footnote 1.

